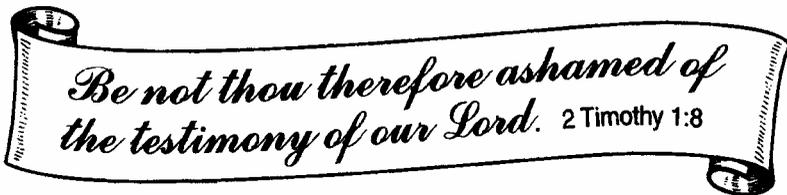


# THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

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## Editorial.

### "Whose Son Is This Youth?"

As youth step out of the obscurity of childhood into the broader circles of church fellowship, they frequently are asked, "Who are your parents?" Knowing to what home one belongs not only provides identification but oftentimes also gives an indication of the spiritual stature of the person.

After a courageous young man stepped forth and won a tremendous victory for Israel, King Saul asked his captain, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" (1 Samuel 17:55). The king wanted to know who this young man was, in whom he saw valuable potential. This young man's youthful faith in the Lord of hosts had re-inspired the fainting hearts of Saul's veteran soldiers. Saul knew that such faith would be a priceless asset to his kingdom. 'And Saul took [David] that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. . . And Saul set him over the men of war" (1 Samuel 18:2, 5).

Like David, youth committed to the cause of Christ are a valuable asset to the home and the church. Their vision is inspiring. Their confidence is encouraging. Their energy is motivating. Their readiness to step into the harness and shoulder responsibility is rewarding. Faithful youth fill a very valuable

place.

On the contrary, uncommitted youth giving expressions of carnality have a weakening effect on the larger group. If they choose to leave the church, rather than to heed spiritual direction, the loss to the young person, the home, and the church is immeasurable. A church without spiritual youth is a dying church.

What should we as homes and congregations do to protect and enhance this valuable asset of faithful youth?

We should pray for them. Our youth need the prayers of those they love to help them live for Jesus every day. Knowing that someone cares and is praying for them helps them to make right choices.

We should give clear instruction and guidance. God gave young people parents for a reason. Youth do not yet have the benefit of age and experience that helps to bring balance to energetic idealism. Practical teaching and preaching stimulate in them a love for God's Word, an understanding of His requirements of holiness, and a desire to do His will. Explaining why we draw the lines of separation where we do builds personal conviction. Giving clear guidelines in areas such as wholesome activities, courtship, and cell phone use, and

then administering them, produce stable youth.

We should require respect for authority. A game warden recently stated that the most difficult part of his job is relating to youth who have little respect for authority. Teaching obedience and respect must begin early in a child's life. But oftentimes it needs to be reinforced as the young person relates to other levels of authority. He needs to submit to authority in matters such as church directives, school board policies, and Bible school standards. Helping our youth to appreciate and support these guidelines will increase their usefulness to the church.

We should involve their contribution. Spiritual young people want to make a contribution. We welcome their input; oftentimes they have good suggestions. If practical, we should consider them. If unrealistic, we should not quickly stifle the idea but refocus it. Our young brethren should be leading songs and conducting devotional periods. As they mature, both brethren and sisters should be given the responsibility of teaching a children's Sunday school class. We expect our youth to support the local outreach efforts and the church wide voluntary service opportunities. Involving their contribution will enhance their vision for the work of the kingdom.

We are thankful for the faithful, committed youth among us. May God continue to bless the valuable contribution they are making. But the challenging questions remain, "Whose sons and daughters are they? From whose homes and congregations do they come? Is it ours?"

May God help us to faithfully do our part "that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace" (Psalm 144:12).

—DLM



### **Why We Said No to the Radio**

In 1895 an Italian inventor discovered that radio waves could be sent through the air. By 1920 scheduled radio programs were being broadcasted. However, this very significant discovery in the history of man has also had very significant negative effects on the home, the social order of society, and the church.

Many professing Christians felt the radio presented a strong potential for spreading the Gospel. Early in the 1930s some preachers began regular religious broadcasts. Some

Mennonites were attracted to these programs.

The Mennonite Church was soon shaken by the influence of this new invention. Her people were listening to preachers who did not share her views and practices of Scripture. Entertainment and ungodly voices were daily coming into the homes of the Mennonite Church. The church had been trying to define the world and its influences through preaching and the establishment of standards, but now the world was among them in an even more definite way.

The Mennonite Church soon realized that she needed to give a voice on this issue. In eastern United States, the Franconia, Lancaster, Washington–Franklin, and Virginia conferences addressed the issue. In 1927 the Lancaster Conference protested against the radio. Later, the Conference did not allow the ministry to have it, a position that continued at least officially into the 1960s. In the Washington–Franklin Conference, the Washington County district never allowed the radio. However, the Franklin County district was weak on the issue and eventually allowed the radio. The Franconia Conference session of October 1931 stated, "We protest against the evils of the radio. Preachers should not remain silent, but condemn the worldly, foolish, as well as the heretical

doctrines on the air and often tuned in by so-called Christian people." This statement was a church standard but may never have been enforced. This unwillingness to enforce standards on the radio was reflected throughout most of the Mennonite Church.

The period of 1930 to 1960 was a time of great change and apostasy in the Mennonite Church. Significantly, this was the very period when Mennonites were embracing the radio. By 1960 the Mennonite Church had basically accepted it. Mennonites were supporting and producing their own broadcasts, including the Mennonite Hour. Perhaps some souls were reached by this method of communicating the Gospel. However, this radio ministry did not produce a Bible-believing church whose membership practiced the Bible in everyday life.

Even though the main body of the Mennonite Church accepted the radio, there were a few homes that did not accept it. Also some church leaders and families became concerned about what was happening to the church. In the 1950s and 1960s, these concerns led to the establishment of conservative congregations and groups not affiliated with the drifting Mennonite conferences. The Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church is one of the groups that was formed in this pe-

riod. In time, they saw the need to eliminate the radio. The 1974 Discipline review required the elimination of the radio within two years of that date.

The decision to eliminate the radio was not an easy one to make. Some had the radio in their homes and needed to dispose of it. Many had listened to the radio from their earliest memories. But we praise God for leaders who had the vision and helped many of us to gain that vision for the future spiritual welfare of our lives and our families.

Why did we need to say no to the radio? Although the sports, the jazz, the talk shows, and the foolishness on the radio did influence far too many, these were not the greatest snare of the radio. The greatest and most subtle damage to the church came through listening to the preaching on the radio. Also detrimental was the singing and music that seemed so heartwarming and inspirational. The attractive spiritual messages on these broadcasts caused Mennonite listeners to consider these radio preachers as sincere Christians who had something to offer even though they did not think or live exactly as the Bible teaches. This view was held even though these preachers would at times label Mennonites and others as legalists, who over-emphasized works.

Also, influential radio preachers

did not produce followers who lived holy lives in obedience to the Scriptures. Most of these men gave a false assurance of salvation and taught unconditional eternal security. Few of these radio broadcasts supported the Biblical positions of nonresistance and nonconformity. Most, in fact, urged support for national military defense. Separation of church and state were very poorly understood and defined.

Another detrimental influence was that prophetic Scriptures were interpreted from extreme viewpoints not in harmony with other Scriptures. Some Mennonites absorbed the unsound concepts of dispensationalism, which is a misinterpretation of the New Testament and is unscriptural concerning the scope and purpose of the church. The Scofield Bible, with its many reference notes, was introduced through radio preaching and was eventually supported by some Mennonite leaders.

Following is a summary of the principles involved in saying no to the radio.

- (1) Satan and his realm may not be given such an entry to our homes.
- (2) The church, not other questionable and uncertain voices, is the agent by which God's people receive direction.
- (3) The religious amalgamation prevalent in religious broadcasts is detrimental because it is deceptive.
- (4) The

church is a visible, living body of Christ that is directed by the Holy Spirit and gives testimony to the world by holiness of life and conduct.

The radio has degenerated, rather than improved, since the 1930s. We need to continue to keep it out of our homes. We thank God for brethren who took a stand against this threatening evil almost forty years ago. We need to continue to have firm conviction that radio and television must not be allowed to destroy us.

The advancement of technology has continued to bring threats in an even greater dimension. Have we learned the lessons that will prevent us from going the path of many in the Mennonite Church? Let us pray that our church leaders may use the wisdom God gives to draw lines at safe places on new communication technology issues. We should be ready to support them, assuring them that we want that safety. We desire a church that Jesus Christ will take for His bride and not a church that is spotted by the blemishes of this world!  
*J.E. Harleysville, PA*



### **When the Lord Comes Down.**

"The Lord came down" is a phrase found several times in the Bible. Sometimes God's presence was a visible appearance; other times it was not. Each time the Lord came down, something significant followed, leaving a lasting impact on those who witnessed it. For what important occasions did God come down to earth? How do these truths affect us today?

The Lord came down to deliver men. God appeared to Moses at the burning bush and told him, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry." In His mercy, God said, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." God miraculously brought Israel out of Egypt. He led them by the pillar of cloud, the evidence of His presence. With many other miracles, He brought them to the Promised Land.

Israel's deliverance from Egypt is typical of our redemption by Christ. He declared, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33). When Christ came down to earth, He left heaven, a place of perfection and beauty, and came to earth, a place filled with sins, including hatred, envy, and corruption. Through the incarnation He took on Himself the

limitations of man. He became hungry and tired, and He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Far greater was the suffering that surrounded His trial and the heavy load He bore as He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." This was all planned by God to deliver man from sin so that he might have eternal life.

The Lord came down to give commandments to men. After Israel's deliverance from Egypt, they journeyed to Mount Sinai. God told them to sanctify themselves because on the third day He would "come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai" (Exodus 19:11). God did come down in a very awesome manner. "There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." God wanted Israel to witness His awesome appearance to impress upon them deep reverence, godly fear, and sacred awe. Following this manifestation of God's glory and power, Israel received the Ten Commandments.

God still impresses men with His greatness and power through thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Men feel helpless and weak in the face of these storms. Often this prepares their hearts to receive God's mes-

sage. Some people are more open to Gospel literature after disaster strikes their home or country. God's desire is that these unusual circumstances will cause men to bend their knees before Him in repentance. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28-29).

We also receive God's message every time the Word is preached. As we have a proper vision of God's greatness and of the infallibility of God's Word, we are prepared to hear it expounded. Our love for God will be shown by our love to hear and keep His commandments.

The Lord came down to give His Spirit to men. The children of Israel complained very quickly in their travels from Egypt to Canaan. One time when they wanted meat, Moses poured out his burden before God. God told Moses to gather seventy men of the elders of Israel to the door of the tabernacle. God then came down and took of Moses' spirit and gave it to these seventy elders, who helped govern and judge the people. As a sign that the Spirit had come upon them, they prophesied.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). God is in our midst at our

ordination services. As the charge is laid on the brother God has called to the work, we are reminded that God will also enable him for that work.

The Holy Spirit came down with visible and audible signs on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit's presence in the believers was confirmed as they spoke in other tongues.

The Holy Spirit also comes into a sinner's life today when he repents and confesses Christ. Thankfully, when He comes into the new believer's heart, He abides there. It is not just a one-time experience, but one which continually manifests itself in life.

The Lord came down in judgment on men. Genesis 11 records man's rebellious intention to build a tower to prevent mankind from being scattered. But God came down in judgment and confused their purposes. God's original plan, that man be spread over the face of the earth, was thus accomplished.

The Lord also came down and stood in the door of the tabernacle to judge Aaron and Miriam for their disrespect of Moses, God's chosen leader. In punishment for her pride, Miriam became a leper and needed to remain outside the camp for seven days.

Today God often does not immediately come down to punish sin. Because of this, natural men become

bold in their sin. God's purpose for withholding judgment is that some will repent and live for Him.

However, the Lord will again come down in judgment. "For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isaiah 26:21). His coming will be visible to all. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Revelation 1:7).

For the Christian, that coming down is part of God's unfolding eternal deliverance of God's people. For His own, God's coming down will mean their eternal glorification in the presence of God and the Lamb. The Christian's testimony is "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." *L.B. Cambridge Springs, PA*



## **Seasoned Speech (Part 4)**

### **An Honeycomb---***by M.S.G.*

*"Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." (Proverbs 16:24)*

Envision fresh honeycomb dripping with pure wild honey! What delectable, mouth-watering sweetness! Honey is not only delectable but also healthful.

Both the sweetness and healthfulness of honey illustrate pleasant words. What are some pleasant words that are as sweet and whole-

some as honeycomb'?

The words of God are, pleasant words. Of all words ever spoken, these are the sweetest and most beneficial. The psalmist declared that God's words are "sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:10). Most sweets are best enjoyed in small quantities. But the more we feast on the Bible, the sweeter it becomes.

Jesus' words were pleasant words. When Jesus walked on earth, all "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." While some of His words of rebuke pricked guilty hearts, all His words were motivated by love and wisdom. We marvel at the compassionate helpfulness of Jesus' speech. Jesus is indeed our flawless model of pleasant words. Words of wisdom are pleasant words. The verse preceding our text, Proverbs 16:23, reveals the role of wisdom in pleasant speech: "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips." When wisdom teaches us what to say, our words will be pleasant. With wisdom's help, even difficult things can be communicated pleasantly.

Friendly words are pleasant words. A genuine interest in others is expressed by inquiring about the welfare of them and their family. A friendly person is skilled at discov-

ering the other person's interests and steering the conversation in that direction. Friendly words of greeting and parting are always in order. Too easily we omit the friendly words that help to brighten life.

Kind words are pleasant words. When another makes a mistake, a few kind words can make him feel better. What do we say when a family member causes us to be late? or when a cup of water is spilled in our lap at mealtime? Is our speech always patient and kind?

Encouraging words are pleasant words. The roughness of life's pathway may discourage even the strongest saint. Are we ready with encouraging words to support the discouraged? When a brother is given additional responsibility, assurance of our prayer support will help to strengthen him. When a mother is burdened with the care of sick children, encouraging words, accompanied by helpful deeds, will brighten a dark day. Encouraging words to our children assure them of our love and understanding.

"My son, eat thou ... honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul" (Proverbs 24:13, 14). As we feed on the sweetness of God's words, our words will be made sweet.